

Duxbury Clipper, Wednesday, April 2, 1997

April Fool's Snow Storm Buries Town-- Causes Major Power Outages

Commonwealth Electric crews were working 18 hour shifts in the aftermath of a devastating April Fool's Day northeaster to restore service to nearly 2,000 Duxbury customers who were still without power Wednesday after more than 20 inches of heavy, wet snow blanketed the town.

Spokesman Peter Dimond said Commonwealth Electric crews were doing their best to keep up with the storm damage, supplementing local crews with additional workers from utility companies in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Maine, and Ontario. Duxbury and Marshfield were particularly hard hit with numerous downed trees, utility poles and wires, he said.

"We're not neglecting anyone but some people probably won't get their service back until the end of the week. The heavy snow and high winds snapped poles and

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blew down wires. It's not a quick fix. The broken poles need to be replaced. Repairs are very labor intensive. We hope our customers will be patient," said Dimond.

About 3,100 homes and businesses in town lost power during the blizzard.

The *Duxbury Clipper* was forced to publish a day later than usual with the staff moving the production operation out of the *Clipper* office on South Station St. because there and the rest of Hall's Corner were still without power until about 1:10 pm Wednesday.

Businesses at Hall's Corner made the best of a tough situation. The A&P Store was forced to bring in a huge refrigeration truck in order to salvage some of its perishable food stock. Duxbury Pizza made sandwiches on a gas grille.

The violent northeast storm registered wind gusts of up to 70 mph, according to Harbormaster Donald Beers who noted that the beach was spared major damage even when peak high tide reached nearly 13 feet toppling snow fencing.

Highway Supt. Paul Balboni said the town was scattered with downed trees and wires and town crews were working overtime to clear roads as soon as they could. He emphasized that Commonwealth Electric, not the town, was authorized to remove the downed trees and poles from wires before power could be restored. Many citizens were calling the DPW frustrated with the delays, he said.

Two DPW vehicles were hit by falling trees as was a Tomasi Nurseries truck hit by a falling tree late Monday night on Temple St. as company President Ric Tomasi headed home to Woodland Way.

Fire Chief William Harriman reported over 50 runs in the 24 hour period following the storm, including providing assistance Tuesday night to Kingston during a major fire at Flowerland. Among the many runs, a Wright Lane resident was transported to the hospital after his foot was caught in a snowblower.

Harriman said the town opened a temporary shelter at Tarkiln Center for people who needed assistance and 3 people took advantage of the relocation opportunity.

Schools and Town Hall were closed both Tuesday and Wednesday while the town dug out.

Police reported scattered skidding accidents both on town roads and Route 3. Due to the weight of the wet snow, the town had to rely on front end loaders and heavy trucks as some of the smaller trucks suffered mechanical problems while plowing.